

CLAIMS:

1. A method for managing machine operation options and configuration comprising:

5 providing a software operation key separable from the machine, the software operation key further comprising a wireless interface, a memory, the memory further comprising a programmable serial region and an option code;

placing the software operation key into the machine;

10 reading via the wireless interface the programmable serial region of the memory and if found blank, initializing with a machine identification number;

comparing the content of the programmable serial region if not blank with the machine identification number;

reading the memory via the wireless interface and placing the option code into the machine; and,

15 operating the machine in accordance with the option code.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the machine is a printing apparatus.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the machine is a multi-function office
20 device.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the memory is a non-volatile type of memory.

25 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the software operation key is a CRUM.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the machine identification number is the machine serial number.

7. A printing machine comprising:

a software operations key separable from the machine, further comprising a wireless interface and a memory, the memory having at least an option code region, and a one time programmable serial region;

an option code written into the option code region of the memory suitable for directing the printing machine to operate in a particular configuration; and,

a control system to access the one time programmable serial region of the memory via the wireless interface and determine thereby if the option code in the option code region of the software operations key should be used to configure the printing machine.

8. The printing machine of claim 7 wherein the memory is non-volatile memory.

9. The printing machine of claim 8 wherein the non-volatile memory is an EEPROM.

10. The printing machine of claim 8 wherein the non-volatile memory is a CRUM.

11. The printing machine of claim 7 wherein the option code directs the printing machine to configure as a scanner.

12. The printing machine of claim 11 wherein the option code directs the printing machine to configure with a scan to email mode.

13. The printing machine of claim 11 wherein the option code directs the printing machine to configure with a scan to internet fax mode.

14. The printing machine of claim 7 wherein the option code directs the printing machine to configure for faster operation.

15. The printing machine of claim 7 wherein the option code directs the printing machine to configure for job based accounting.

16. A software operations key for setting the option configuration of a machine and separable from that machine, comprising:

a wireless interface,

a memory, the memory having at least:

an option code region, and

a one time programmable serial region; and,

an option code written into the option code region of the memory suitable when accessed via the wireless interface, for directing the machine to operate in a particular configuration.

17. The software operations key of claim 16 wherein the memory is an EEPROM.

18. The software operations key of claim 16 wherein the memory is a CRUM.

19. The software operations key of claim 17 wherein the one time programmable serial region has a machine identifier written into it.

20. The software operations key of claim 19 wherein the machine identifier is the machine serial number.